

Assateague Island National Seashore
Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

Timeline



1500

1524

Giovanni da Verranzano, a Florentine employed by King Francis I of France, sails his ship, Dauphine, somewhere in the vicinity of Accomack County.



Giovanni da Verranzano 1485-1528.

1700

1790

August 4 - Congress authorizes the building of the first "ten boats", establishing the Revenue Marine and the Revenue Cutter Service. The history of the Coast Guard begins.

1800

1871

The US Life-Saving Service (USLSS) is established. Approximately 280 stations are built on the East and West Coasts and the Great Lakes.

1874

June 20 - New legislation establishes 4 life-saving stations on Assateague Island:

- **Assateague Beach Station**
- Green Run Inlet Station
- North Beach Station
- Popes Island Station

1875

Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station is built on the southern end of the island, a combination of Stick and Carpenter Gothic Styles.



1874 Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station and Surfmen.

1900

1906

By this date the sandy hook of "Toms Cove" has been formed due to the continual shifting of sands on the eastern shore.

1915

January 28 - President Woodrow Wilson signs act to merge the US Life-Saving Service with the US Revenue Cutter Service to create the US Coast Guard.



Chief Massey & crew



Crew & pony

1920

1920-1933

US Coast Guard duties increase with the onset of Prohibition, known as the "Rum War". The Coast Guard was a major player in greatly reducing the amount of liquor smuggled into the US.

1921

Samuel B. Field transfers land ownership on the hook of Assateague to the Department of Treasury.

1922

A new Chatham-style station house and garage are built along with a flag tower and wreck pole. Construction of lookout tower is begun. US Coast Guard Station No. 150 is transferred to new location between Toms Cove and the Atlantic Ocean.



US Coast Guard Station No. 150, 1925

1930

1931-1935

The wooden walkway, wharf and T-dock are constructed.

1932-1938

Station undergoes alterations of a new porch and west door, likely built in 1938.

1933

The Great Hurricane devastates the town of Chincoteague and destroys Wallops Island Station. The Assateague Station landscape is under water and continues shifting and changing.

1938-1939

New Colonial Revival Style boathouse is built on the shore of Toms Cove with marine railways on the launchway. The lookout tower is raised from two stories to three.

1939

July - Congress merges the US Lighthouse Service with the US Coast Guard. Duties at Assateague Beach Station increase.



Hunsinger & motorlaunch

1940

1941-1946

US Coast Guard duties increase with involvement in WW II. Horse, truck and foot patrols and round-the-clock watches are performed. 40-50 servicemen and volunteers are at the Station with temporary housing. The Coast Guard is transferred to the Navy.

1943

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is established.



Roy Hunsinger



Crew & guests

1950

1952

North Beach Station is decommissioned.

1953

Popes Island Station is decommissioned.

1959

Generator house is built.



Station crew



Station vehicles

1960

1961

Assateague State Park is established.

1962

Destruction from the famous Ash Wednesday Nor'easter rekindles NPS interest in Assateague Island. The Station landscape is ravaged. A National Seashore Proposal is published.

1962-1965

Sand, fencing and man-made vegetated mounds are constructed along Station boundaries.

1965

September 21 - Assateague Island National Seashore is signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1967

April 1 - the Coast Guard ends its 177-year association with the Treasury Department and enters the newly-created Department of Transportation.

The Station is decommissioned and NPS takes possession.



1962 storm damages highway on Assateague Island.

1970

1972-1973

The Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer places Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station and Popes Island Life-Saving Station on the Virginia Landmarks Register.



Joe Searcella - 1965



Crew having breakfast - 1965

1980

1980

The Station is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

1982

General Management Plan (GMP) is completed for the park and recommends stabilization, adaptive reuse and interpretation of the Station.

1987

Report analyzing management alternatives for the Station.



Motor lifeboat - 1965



Beach car - 1964

1990

1999

US Life-Saving Heritage Act establishes a program to inventory, evaluate and document the condition of historic life-saving stations to be conducted by the National Maritime Initiative of the NPS with the US Life-Saving Service Heritage Association.



Oral History Project: Williams & Funk



Oral History Project: Group

2000

2002

The park commissions a study by the US Department of Energy to analyze the use of alternative energy systems at the Station. The capital costs to install such systems were deemed too high.

2003

The park undertakes an oral history documentation project and interviews four people about their experiences at the Station.



Oral History Project: Johnson & crew



Oral History Project: Lewis & Bitner

NPS holds public workshops to get community input on reuse ideas for the Station.